

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 5309

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE: VIEWS OF UK FCO OFFICER

REF: LONDON 12532

1. ON AFTERNOON 26 SEPTEMBER, UK DCM LOGAN AND CHRIS TICKELL OF UK FCO (IN BRUSSELS FOR EUROOGROUP MEETING) CALLED ON MCAULIFFE. DEF ADVISOR LEGERE AND POL COUNSELOR PEREZ PRESENT. TICKELL NOTED THAT HE WILL ACCOMPANY HOCKADAY TO WASHINGTON TRILATERALS ON 9 OCTOBER AND THAT HE HAD READ US MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE PAPER THE PREVIOUS DAY. HIS COMMENTS ON IT COMPRISED THREE MAJOR POINTS.

2. FIRST MAJOR POINT WAS ONE HE WARNED GERMANS MIGHT WELL RAISE, BUT TO WHICH HE ALSO SEEMED TO SUBSCRIBE HIMSELF. POINT WAS THAT US PAPER'S STATEMENT THAT CONVENTIONAL FORCES COMPRISED "THE MAIN DETERRENT TO THE PALUSIBLE CONVENTIONAL ATTACKS" SEEMED TO UNDERMINE BASIC US AND NATO POSITION ON IMPORTANCE ALL ELEMENTS OF TRIAD: CONVENTIONAL, TACTICAL NUCLEAR, AND STRATEGIC DEFENSE. TICKELL FELT THAT INSISTENCE ON EXPRESS LANGUAGE OF THIS KIND, WHICH HE CONSIDERED "THEOLOGICAL", COULD INHIBIT PROGRESS ON REAL-WORLD BUSINESS OF IMPROVING CONVENTIONAL FORCES. TICKELL ALSO WONDERED WHY US PAPER DID NOT COVER TACTICAL NUCLEAR AND STRATEGIC NUCLEAR ELEMENTS OF TRIAD. LEGERE POINTED CONFIDENTIAL

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OUT THAT ONE PURPOSE OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE EXERCISE THIS AUTUMN, WELL IN ADVANCE OF SCHEDULE OF PREVIOUS CYCLES, WAS TO ADDRESS PRIORITY ITEMS IN PRIORITY ORDER, AND THAT US BELIEVED CONVENTIONAL SITUATION SHOULD COMMAND PRIOR ATTENTION.

3. TICKELL'S SECOND MAJOR POINT CONCERNED WHAT HE CALLED THE NATURE OF CONVENTIONAL WAR, AND IN THIS RESPECT HE ALLEGED A LOGICAL INCONSISTENCY IN THE US PAPER. HIS POINT WAS THAT ON THE ONE HAND THE US PAPER CALLED FOR CONVENTIONAL IMPROVEMENTS SO THAT NATO COULD FIGHT A "LONG WAR", WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PAPER INTERPRETED WARSAW PACT ACTUAL MILITARY SITUATION AS ENABLING PACT TO FIGHT ONLY A "SHORT WAR". LEGERE POINTED OUT THAT LONG WAR VERSUS SHORT WAR COMPARISON WAS WRONG DIMENSION IN WHICH TO VIEW SUBSTANCE US PAPER'S CONTENT ON CONVENTIONAL BALANCE. RATHER, POINT WAS THAT EVEN-HANDED NET ASSESSMENT OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES SIMPLY PLACES NATO IN CONSIDERABLY MORE FAVORABLE POSITION VIS-A-VIS PACT THAN MUCH CONVENTIONAL WISDOM OF PAST HAD BEEN INCLUDED TO CONCLUDE.

4. TICKELL'S THIRD MAJOR POINT WAS THAT US PAPER CONFINED ITSELF TO CENTRAL FRONT ONLY, AND HE WONDERED WHY THIS WAS SO. LEGERE REPLIED THAT REASON FOR THIS WAS SIMILAR TO REASON CITED ABOVE FOR EMPHASIS ON CONVENTIONAL LEG OF TRIAD, I.E., CURRENT PRIORITIES UNDERLINED IMPORTANCE OF CENTRAL FRONT, WHICH SHOULD THEREFORE BE TREATED FIRST.

5. TICKELL STRESSED PERSONAL NATURE OF HIS VIEWS AND IMPLIED THAT HIS FIRST TWO POINTS MIGHT BE OF PRIME CONCERN TO GERMANS. HOWEVER, FACT HE IS ACCOMPANYING HOCKADAY TO WASHINGTON MAY INDICATE THAT BRITISH COULD RAISE THESE OR RELATED POINTS DURING TRILATERALS.

6. TICKELL REFERRED TO "AGENDA" FOR FORTHCOMING TRILATERAL MEETING AS INCLUDING (1) MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE, (2) "THE MEDITERRANEAN", AND (3) RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MBFR, CSCE, AND SALT. WE DO NOT KNOW STATUS OF ANY AGENDA FOR MEETING, NOR MEANING OF ITEM ON "THE MEDITERRANEAN" (ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY MEANS CYPRUS-GREEK-TURKISH COMPLEX, WITH EMPHASIS ON GREECE). ITEM (3), WE FEEL, WILL PROBABLY HIGHLIGHT INTERRELATED NUCLEAR PROBLEMS INHERING IN NUNN AMENDMENT, FINNEY STORY, AND PROSPECTS OF NUCLEAR HINT.

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NOTE BY OC/T: DISTRIBUTION PER S/S-O, MR. JOHNSON.

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